

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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----- 095483

R 060742Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7832

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 5090

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IS, LE

1. REQUEST FOR

MORE DETAILED INFO ON 5 AUG IDF ATTACKS

IN SOUTH LEBANON RESULTED IN DATT MEETING WITH MG GAZIT, DMI, AT 2030 LOCAL, 5 AUG. GAZIT WAS REASONABLY WELL PREPARED WITH ANNOTATED MAPS AND PHOTOS BUT HAD TO TELEPHONE OTHERS (INCLUDING IAF C.O. MG PELED) TO GET ANSWERS TO SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.

2. THE ATTACK FROM THE SEA ON AN ALLEGED ACTIVE FATAH BASE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE AL-BASS REFUGEE CAMP, JUST EAST OF TYRE, WAS COVERED FIRST. GAZIT CLAIMED THAT THIS BASE HAD A STAFF OF 30 FATAH MEN, A WEAPONS AND AMMO STORAGE FACILITY, AND ALSO SERVED AS THE MAIN SUPPORT BASE FOR 300 "TERRORISTS" BEING TRAINED IN AL-BASS CAMP.

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3. GAZIT SAID THAT IDF INTELL HAD BEEN AWARE OF THIS CAMP FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND THAT MOST RECENT VERIFICATION THAT IT WAS OCCUPIED BY FATAH WAS ON 3 AUG. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, HE DISCLAIMED ANY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN TIMING OF ATTACK.

HE REITERATED THE STANDARD THEME THAT ISRAEL WAS AT WAR WITH THE TERRORISTS AND IF THE IDF KNOWS WHERE THEY ARE, THEY WILL HIT THEM.

4. GAZIT THEN ELABORATED ON THEME BY SAYING THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS DO NOT NORMALLY DICTATE THAT AN ATTACK WILL BE MOUNTED, BUT THAT THEY FREQUENTLY DICTATE WHEN MILITARY ACTIONS WILL NOT BE APPROVED. HE CITED THE PAST FEW MONTHS OF INTERNAL LEBANESE TURMOIL AS MOST RECENT EXAMPLE, INFERRING THAT THIS SPECIFIC RAID MAY HAVE BEEN DEFERRED FOR THIS REASON.

5. HE THEN CONFIRMED EMPHATICALLY THAT ALL IDF OPERATIONS ACROSS THE BORDER REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER. ROUTINE NIGHTLY PATROLS AND THE AUTHORITY TO RETURN FIRE HAVE BLANKET APPROVAL OF PM, BUT OTHER OPERATIONS REQUIRE SPECIFIC CLEARANCE.

6. GAZIT GAVE FOLLOWING DETAILS OF RAID. FORCE APPROACHED BY SEA. IDF NAVY SARR BOATS SHELLED UNINHABITED SAN DUNE AREA SOUTH OF TYRE TO CREATE A DIVERSION WHILE RAIDING PARTY WENT ASHORE IN RUBBER BOATS. DESPITE THE DIVERSION, THE PARTY WAS DETECTED AND THE TERRORISTS OPENED FIRE. IDF CLAIMS FEDAYEEN AMMO CACHE BLOWN UP AND FIVE FATAH KILLED.

7. RAIDING PARTY THEN CAME UNDER FIRE FROM ALL DIRECTIONS AND ILLUMINATING ROUNDS WERE FIRED BY LEBANESE ARMY UNIT FROM ARMOR CAMP LOCATED 500-600 METERS EAST OF TARGET AREA. COMMANDER OF RAIDING PARTY CALLED FOR ARTILLERY SUPPORT. GAZIT CLAIMS ONLY TWO ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE DIRECTED AT LEBANESE ARMY CAMP QUOTE UNFORTUNATELY UNQUOTE KILLING FOUR LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS. ARTILLERY ALSO WOUNDED TWO OR THREE LEBANESE SOLDIERS AND 12 OTHERS (POSSIBLY REFUGEES). IDF WITHDREW, SUSTAINING NO CASUALTIES DURING ENTIRE OPERATION, ACCORDING TO GAZIT. NO LEBANESE PRISONERS TAKEN BY IDF.

8. THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE ATTACK ON TWO FEDAYEEN BASES NEAR
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LITANI RIVER, NORTH OF TYRE, WAS COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO COMMANDO RAID, ACCORDING TO GAZIT. TWO SEPARATE BASES WERE ATTACKED BY A TOTAL OF SEVEN SKYHAWKS. ONE BASE CONSISTED OF SIX BUILDINGS WHICH HOUSED A SAIQA COMMAND POST, ADMIN OFFICES, AND TRAINING FACILITIES. GAZIT CLAIMED IDF HAS BEEN AWARE OF THIS CAMP FOR AT LEAST FIVE OR SIX WEEKS, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO URGENCY TO ATTACK IT.

9. THE SECOND BASE WAS A DIFFERENT MATTER. INFO RECEIVED ON 4 AUG CONVINCED IDF THAT A FORCE OF JIBRIL'S MEN HAD SET UP CAMP IN AN ORCHARD AND WERE PLANNING AN INFILTRATION INTO ISRAEL. GAZIT CLAIMED IT WAS NECESSARY TO ATTACK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS JIBRIL'S MEN WERE UNPREDICTABLE AND ALWAYS ON THE MOVE. IDF PARTICULARLY WORRIED WHERE JIBRIL FORCES

ARE CONCERNED SINCE THEY ARE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED OF FEDAYEEN FORCES. SPECIAL WORRY AT MOMENT IS INDICATION THAT JIBRIL FORCES HAVE A NEW DEVICE THAT PERMITS THEM TO SCALE BORDER FENCE WITHOUT LEAVING ANY TRACE.

10. DECISION WAS MADE TO ATTACK THIS BASE BY AIR AND, SINCE SAIQA CAMP WAS LESS THAN A KILOMETER AWAY, TO TAKE IT OUT AS WELL. NOTE: BOTH BASES ARE SANDWICHED BETWEEN TWO REFUGEE CAMPS (BARALIYA AND QASMIYA).

11. PILOTS CLAIM ALL SIX BUILDINGS DESTROYED IN SAIQA CAMP. DAMAGE IN JIBRIL CAMP UNKNOWN, BUT ONE PASSING CAR WAS HIT, ACCORDING TO PILOTS. THERE WAS APPARENTLY SOME DAMAGE TO HOUSES IN QASMIYA REFUGEE CAMP. GAZIT CONCEDED THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME "MISTAKE". WHEN DATT PRESSED FOR MORE DETAILED INFO, GAZIT CALLED THE IAF COMMANDER, MG PELED, WHO CLAIMED EARLY INTERPRETATION OF RECCE PHOTOS SHOWED THAT ALL BOMBS HAD LANDED IN TARGET AREAS, AND THAT DAMAGE TO HOUSES (TIN ROOFS BLOWN OFF) HAD BEEN INDIRECT. NO INDICATION OF ANY AIR DEFENSE ACTIVITY, AND ALL IAF AIRCRAFT RETURNED SAFELY.
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